



## Meeting Notice

SBOH #13-011

For immediate release: November 12, 2013

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### **Oral health strategies on State Board of Health's November agenda**

*Strategies will improve the oral health and reduce medical costs for Washington residents*

OLYMPIA – Recommended oral health strategies that will help improve the health of Washington residents will be the subject of a public presentation tomorrow, Wednesday, Nov. 13 in SeaTac when the State Board of Health meets.

Although preventable, dental disease is costly, painful, debilitating and widespread in Washington State.

Dental disease is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Untreated it can cause intense pain that affects a child's ability to eat, get enough sleep, pay attention and sit in class. Nationally, more than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness.

For adults, untreated dental disease can result in many issues that can impact the quality of life such as pain, poor nutrition, and social. Older adults are particularly at risk due to taking multiple medications that cause dry mouth and lead to tooth decay.

Poor dental health is costly for Washington residents. According to a 2010 report by the Washington State Hospital Association, dental complaints were the number one reason uninsured adults visited emergency rooms, costing over \$36 million in an 18-month period. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports employed adults lose more than 164 million hours of work nationally due to dental health problems.

Strategies that prevent and treat dental disease improve oral health and save money. For example, providing dental treatment to people with diabetes reduces hospitalizations by 61 percent in the first year of treatment and reduces medical costs on average \$3,200 per year.

The board convened two expert oral-health advisory groups to develop seven strategic recommendations that address a wide range of oral health strategies ranging from policy development to project implementation. At the November meeting the board may endorse the recommended strategies to improve the oral health of Washington residents.

In addition to the discussion on oral health strategies, the meeting will also feature a presentation by Joe McDermott, King County Council member and King County Board of Health Chair on King County's pharmaceutical take-back ordinance. The program, which received the 2013 Washington State Exemplary Substance Abuse Prevention Award, covers both prescription and over-the-counter drugs with the goal of protecting public health and the environment.

The Board of Health will meet from 9 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 14 in the Red Lion Hotel Seattle Airport located at 18220 International Blvd in SeaTac. This meeting is open to the public with an opportunity for testimony on any public health issue.

Copies of the agenda and related materials are available by contacting the board at 360-236-4100 or on the [Board of Health website](http://sboh.wa.gov) (sboh.wa.gov). The emergency and media contact number for the board during the meeting is 360-701-2398.

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The board's mission is to provide statewide leadership in advancing policies that protect and improve the public's health. It does this by reviewing and monitoring the health status of all people in Washington; analyzing policies, providing guidance, and developing rules; promoting system partnerships; and encouraging public engagement in the public health system. For more information, visit the [Board of Health website](http://sboh.wa.gov) (sboh.wa.gov)